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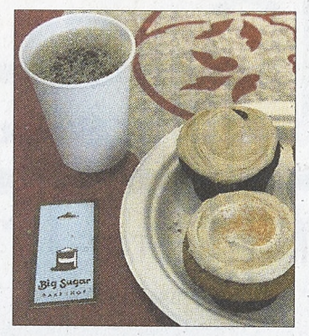
VALLEY STAR

the independent student newspaper

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Valley College Sheriff's Department is not giving students the facts on safety.

SEE OPINION PAGE 3



The Valley Star reviews Big Sugar Bakeshop, located in Studio City.

SEE VALLEY LIFE PAGE 4

Valley College pole-vaulter Molly Pearlman sets a new record for the Monarch track and field team.

SEE SPORTS PAGE 6

lavalleystar.com | March 14, 2012 | Volume 76 Issue 3

ASU FILLS EMPTY POSITIONS

ASU appoints new commissioners to its council as it looks for a new attorney general.

ROMEO GONZALEZ
STAFF WRITER

Valley College's ASU assigned two new commissioners to its executive council but is searching for someone to replace former Attorney General Brandon Batham.

Batham resigned as attorney general after being in office for one semester, choosing to fill the opening position of student trustee. This ASU position has been available for more than two weeks, and the union's president, Norvan Berkezyan, has not decided who will succeed Batham.

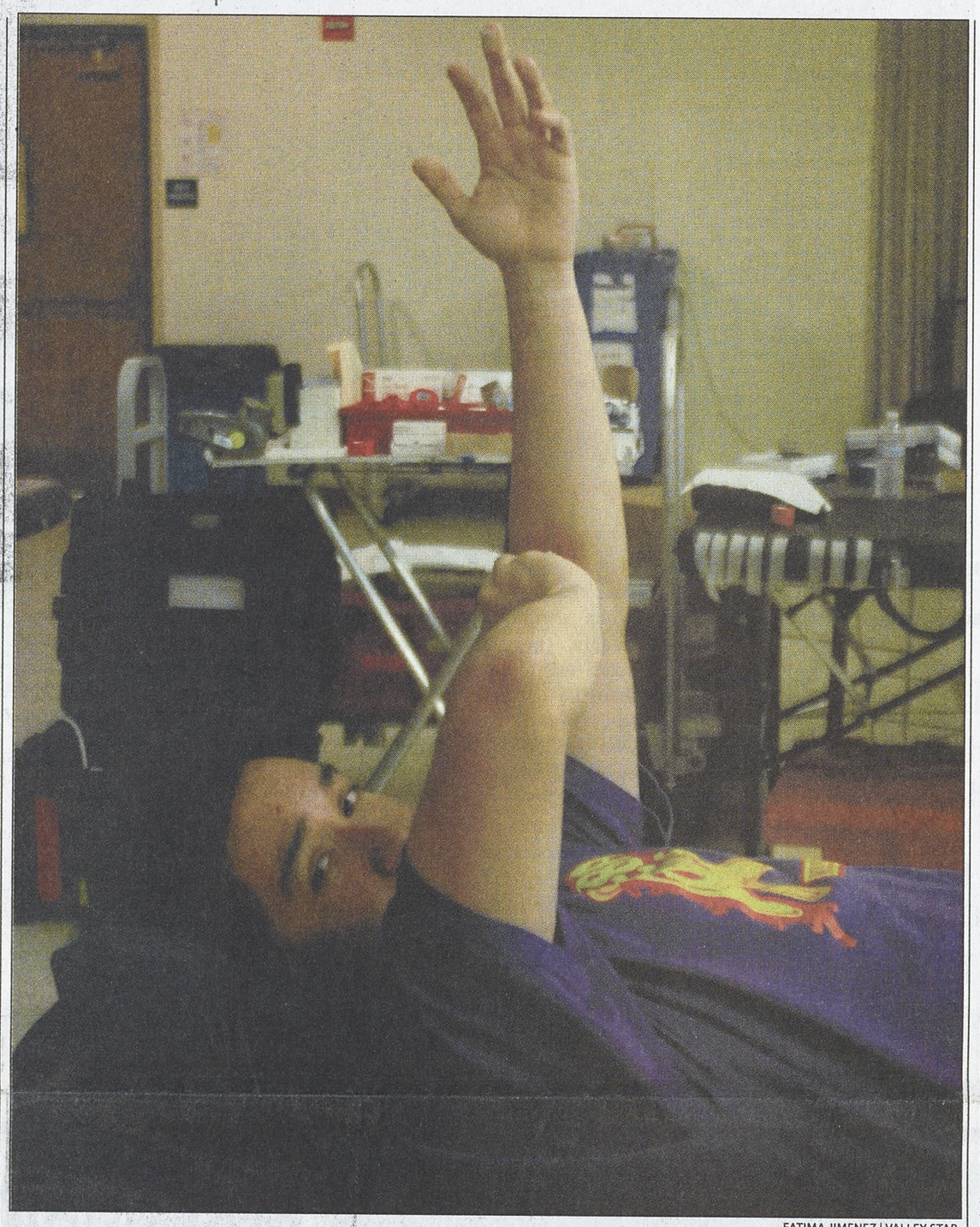
"I personally look for someone who is interested in the process," said Berkezyan.

Normally, all positions are chosen by students in the annual elections, but in this case where three board members resigned halfway through the year, it becomes the president's and board's decision.

"We find students who are qualified, good students [who are] succeeding in their classes and you provide them with an opportunity," said Berkezyan. "This is a way for students to get involved."

According to Berkezyan, there are certain actions both he and the board must take when appointing a new attorney general. The president has to appoint someone; then, the board has to approve his appointment in order

|See ASU Page 2|



FATIMA JIMENEZ | VALLEY STAR

ALL IN VEIN - "Man that stings ... that's it?" said Daniel Gonzalez to Jenny Zamora, who withdrew his blood at the blood drive Tuesday in Monarch Hall. According to Zamora, it was busy all day and they were booked. Possible donors are asked to write down their information and answer a questionnaire. A blood-pressure test and iron count are just a few tests taken to determine whether a person is eligible to donate blood. The entire process takes about 45 minutes.

REDISTRICTING MEANS CHANGE FOR MANY VALLEY RESIDENTS

Los Angeles City Council districts have been redrawn, leading to new representatives for many.

KEVIN JERSEY
STAFF WRITER

Residents of many neighborhoods near Valley College will soon find themselves in a new voting district with different representation on the Los Angeles City Council.

After months of deliberation, the Los Angeles Redistricting Commission has finalized a plan to re-draw the boundaries of the city's 15 voting districts, including those surrounding Valley. The 21-member commission, consisting of at least one appointee from each district, voted 16-5 in favor of the new boundaries.

The process, however, was not easy and was met with protests throughout the city. In the valley, protestors included the Greater Toluca Lake Neighborhood Council and the Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council. Residents in these areas are concerned that splitting neighborhoods into multiple districts would make it harder for them to gain access to city services. Likewise, councilmembers are reluctant to lose neighborhoods where they have spent time forming relationships with the residents.

"I have great affection and concern for every block of my current district, and I've worked hard to serve each of the 11 communities that I currently represent," said Councilmember Paul Krekorian, whose district also includes Valley's campus. "Unfortunately, population increases in the area require that Council District 2 shrink in size, and demographic changes make changes in the boundaries inevitable. Thus, under any scenario, I will be required to give up some neighborhoods that I care about very much."

Councilmember Tom LaBonge represents District 4 and is worried about the relationships he has formed with people living in his district. "That's a matter of years you develop these relationships," he said in an interview with ABC News. "That all disappears if you have a new district."

This redistricting process is required every 10 years. It is intended to reflect shifts in population within the city and to ensure that different ethnic and religious groups will be properly represented by the City Council. Despite its efforts, the commission has discovered that it is nearly impossible to draw the district borders in a way that will please everyone.

"The function of the commission is to listen to the people, and I don't know if they've listened to

|See DISTRICT Page 2|

VALLEY COLLEGE OFFERS NEW DAILY PARKING OPTIONS

New pay stations on campus offer visitors and students alternatives to a semester parking pass.

EDYTHE SMITH
STAFF WRITER

As of March 5, Valley College offers daily parking permits for students and visitors through solar-powered pay stations, drawing concerns of regulation and timing from students.

Yang Management – the company handling Valley's construction projects – began installing the pay stations this year in February. The installation was for six concrete pads needed for the machines and infrastructure for three electrically powered machines.

According to Annie Harutyunyan, a cadet for Valley's Sheriff's Department, the district supplied the stations.

"It's mainly for visitors," said Harutyunyan. "Most of the other campuses in the LACCD have similar systems, and we're the latest to get them. It's more beneficial to those who are rarely on campus."

The daily passes are available to students and visitors for $2 a day and can be purchased in parking lots A and D. Once the pass is paid for, parking can be obtained in any of the lots that are not reserved for faculty. The stations only accept cash and require exact change. Students who attend campus more often can opt for a $20 semester parking pass.

Many students feel as though the new stations should have been announced and activated at the beginning of the semester. Sonya Gibson, a former Valley student who occasionally visits the college for performances, agrees.

"It seems strange to start it in March," said Gibson. "People who are used to visiting and parking on the campus might not notice them, and I doubt the students know about it or will benefit from it."

The new pay stations complement Valley's ongoing efforts

|See PARKING Page 2|

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE HASBUN | VALLEY STAR

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPROVES A SAFER AND MORE ACCESIBLE BIKE PATH

Los Angeles County is spending $330 million over the next 20 years to construct 832 miles of new bike paths and improve access and safety for bike transit.

ANNE CHRISTENSEN
STAFF WRITER

The Los Angeles County board of supervisors approved the Bicycle Master Plan with a 4-0 vote Feb. 28, detailing plans for spending $330 million over the next 20 years to construct 832 miles of new bike paths and improve access and safety for bike transit within the county.

The Bicycle Master Plan's purpose is to "improve the mobility of bicyclists and encourage more bicycle ridership," according to the county. The planning process focused on the environmental, economic and public health benefits of creating a more bike-friendly community. The five-year first phase includes several areas in the San Fernando Valley: La Crescenta, Rosemont, Altura and Briggs avenues. Also in the works are community and youth bicycle safety education classes and bike repair workshops.

Funding for the $330 million project will come from federal, state and regional grant sources, according to Pat DeChellis, deputy director of Public Works. No funding will be transferred from road construction to bike path construction other than putting up signs or painting new bike lanes when a road is being built or repaired.

"This plan is $330 million to complete the entire thing. That's only a third of the 405 [freeway] widening project," said Alexis Lantz of the California Bicycle Coalition. "So while it sounds like a lot of money, it's a lot less than what we're spending right now to expand our highway system."

County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky has been working with bike organizations and the Department of Public Works—responsible for the design, construction, operation, maintenance and repair of roads, bridges and other public facilities in the county—to expand the Master Plan from the proposed 695 miles of bike paths to the approved 832 miles. Also included is prioritizing communities with the greatest need for safer bike paths and traffic-calming measures, such as speed bumps. County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas also included a motion for bike parking at county facilities.

The strained economy has forced some commuters to rethink their transportation options in a bid to save money, which has resulted in more bikes on the road. However, this has also increased the number of bike-related accidents and fatalities. According to the Transportation Injury Mapping System—established by researchers at the University of California, Berkeley—there was a total of 1,433 reported bike-related accidents in 2000, with 28 resulting in the death of the rider. That number increased to 1,591 in 2008, with 33 rider fatalities. Between 2000 and 2008, 229 bike riders died in the county.

Even though no roads directly surrounding Valley will be affected by the bike path expansion, students may still reap the benefits of an increased awareness brought on by the measure. According to Emily Traub, president of Valley's EcoAdvocates, "The road is a scary place for bikes and vehicles to share, especially for the bikers. Providing more bike paths will make people more willing to get on their bikes and go. This means fewer cars on the road, healthier people and a happier and healthier environment. We have nothing to lose and so much to gain."

THE VALLEY STAR INFO & STAFF

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ASU

Continued from page 1

for that person to obtain the position of attorney general.

The attorney general is part of the president's cabinet and serves as the official reference for the executive council regarding rules of order during meetings. Valley's ASU magazine states this job requires the person to be familiar with the ASU Constitution and bylaws, as well as parliamentary procedures and Robert's Rules of Order.

Another position recently filled was the commissioner of public relations, formally held by Javiera Infante and replaced by Jehiry Deharo. George Makarian was also newly appointed as commissioner of athletics, replacing Elina Davtyan.

Deharos' first day as commissioner of public relations was last Tuesday. Her responsibilities include assisting other commissioners and members of the ICC with publicizing events, as well as overseeing the creation of event flyers and advertising.

"I really like being involved in school," said Deharo. "I saw this as the perfect opportunity." When appointing new commissioners, the president and the board use a different procedure than the one used to appoint a new attorney general. Everyone who applies and qualifies for a commissioner position goes in for an interview. After the interview, the applicants step out while the board discusses and decides who the right person for the job is.

"There is always two really qualified people going for one position," said Berkezyan. "One of them gets it; one of them doesn't, but you want to get that one qualified person involved in the process."

STEP 1 PUSH ANY BUTT TO START UNI
STEP 2 PUSH BUTTON TO SELECT PURCHASE TIME
STEP 3 INSERT PAYMENT
STEP 4 TAKE RECEIPT PLACE ON DASH
NO CHANGE GIVEN
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE HASBUN | VALLEY STAR

PARKING

Continued from page 1

toward environmental awareness. The Los Angeles Community College District board of trustees is implementing a "district-wide plan to incorporate energy-saving and experimentally friendly features" on campuses. However, students are concerned the passes will create more traffic and allow visitors to occupy spaces outside of Lot B, which was formally the only lot open to visitors.

"Parking is already a pain," said Valley music major Thom Petrizzo. "Now I'm going to have to leave even earlier to get something decent. As if other students weren't enough, now anyone with $2 can beat me to a spot. For all I know, a 'visitor' could be parking their car to use the metro."

Several signs are posted in the parking lots, notifying students that parking was free to students only during the first two weeks of classes. Students had until Feb. 21 to purchase a pass for this semester, and the Valley Sheriff's Department are now issuing citations for vehicles without a valid permit.

Permits are required for students who have a class that meets for more than four weeks. Those taking a class that ends within that time frame were given a complimentary parking pass, but the Sheriff's Department was unable to comment on whether, in the future, that privilege would be revoked and replaced with the daily passes.

DISTRICT

Continued from page 1

the people as it's been drafted," said LaBonge, whose district will now stretch all the way from Silver Lake to the 405 freeway in Sherman Oaks. His District 4 will also add the area south of Burbank Boulevard across from Valley, which currently belongs to District 5 and Councilmember Paul Koretz.

Because council appointees performed the redistricting process instead of an independent panel, protesters have alleged that it has been driven by the councilmembers' desire to add politically strategic areas to their districts, rather than by a desire to do what is best for their constituents. The transcripts of the almost two-dozen public hearings that have been held are filled with statements from citizens who are concerned the council will not adequately represent them.

Krekorian doesn't think his constituents have anything to worry about. "Regardless of how the political lines of my district are ultimately drawn, though, I will always stand with the residents of the San Fernando Valley in fighting for issues that matter to us," he said, "including protecting open space, preserving community character and quality of life, creating jobs and opportunity, and making our community stronger."

The Redistricting Commission has released its final proposal, but the process is not over yet. The City Council must approve the new district map by July 1, and there is the possibility for further modifications between now and then. One thing is certain, though: there will be changes, and not everyone will be happy with them.

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ASU BRAINSTORMS SOLUTION FOR $6-MILLION SHORTFALL

The ASU shines a light on how hard Valley College will be hit by budget cuts.

EDYTHE SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The Valley College Associated Student Union Executive Council held a special meeting Tuesday to discuss various items pertaining to budgets, ASU membership benefits and Spirit Day.

With several excused and absent commissioners and a vacant position for attorney general, the council moved toward agendas in the works, upcoming events and budgetary shortfalls.

The council addressed concerns with the new cuts to several programs. According to ASU President Norvan Berkezyan, a report from a recent IEC meeting announced that Valley is facing a budget shortfall of $6 million.

"The college has been hit harder than expected," said Berkezyan. "Right now, they're trying to figure out how to make up for it and reduce the $6 million shortfall to $2 million."

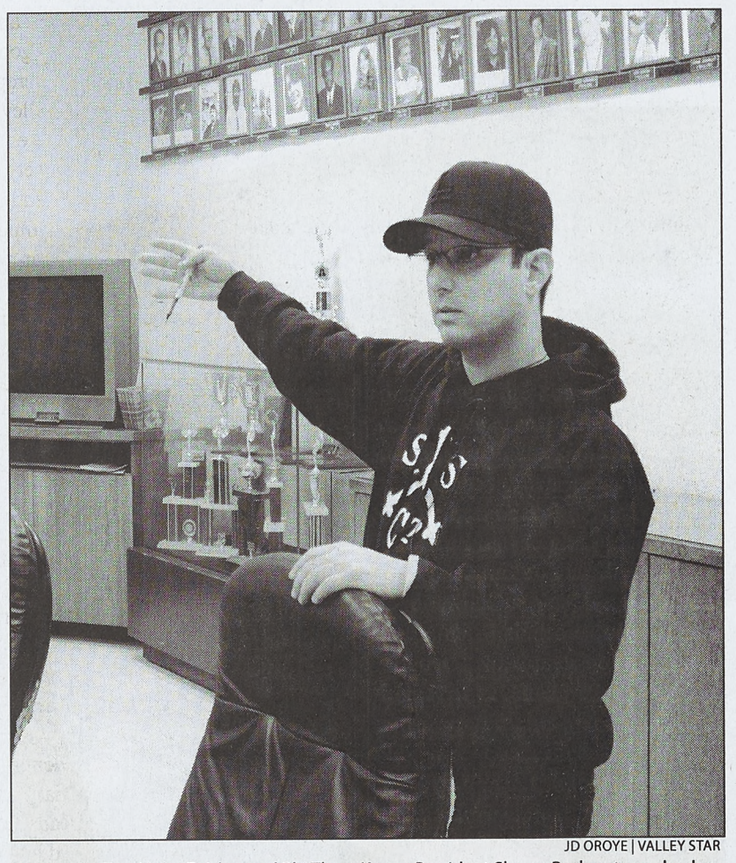
Funds for the tutoring center may be jeopardized, and both the writing and learning centers will be overseen by one director. Summer and winter sessions have been cancelled, and several ASU representatives are going to Washington, D.C. this weekend to lobby against the increase in budget cuts.

Shawn Besharaty, a member of the Membership Benefits Committee, addressed the council in the absence of Lester Salvador, the commissioner of campus/environmental affairs and head of the Benefits Committee. Besharaty gave several updates on various motions, such as plans for preferred parking for ASU members, discounts for students from local vendors and grants toward textbooks.

"At first, initial costs would be high, but eventually they would benefit us," said Besharaty. "This would give us a reciprocating relationship with local businesses."

Besharaty stated that preferred parking in desirable lots for a higher fee would create revenue over time, benefiting the ASU and students. Other suggested membership benefits include discounts with participating restaurants and merchants and a grant for textbooks.

Closing announcements were made regarding Spirit Day. Berkezyan and Vice President Eduard Grigoryan encouraged officers and commissioners to attend and participate in the events.


JD OROYE | VALLEY STAR

MEETING - Tau Alpha Epislon and Phi Theta Kappa President Shawn Besharaty spoke during Tuesday's Associated Student Union meeting in Campus Center. He talked about possible solutions to the multi-million dollar deficit Valley College is facing.

EDITOR'S NOTE:
The views expressed on this page are solely those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Valley Star, its instructors, editors, staff or those of Los Angeles Valley College, its administrators, faculty, staff, or students.

INFLATED GAS PRICES OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY

The high cost of gas provides added incentive to explore alternative fuel options.

KEVIN JERSEY
STAFF WRITER

RICHARD RAZAVI | VALLEY STAR
RUNNING ON FUMES - As the frustration over rising gas prices mounts, we must look to the future and consider alternative fuel options, such as solar, wind and biofuels.

Gas prices are up. It is impossible not to notice. The national average cost of a gallon of gas has reached $3.79, with prices even higher in California. But, it does not have to be this way. Alternative energy solutions must be found.

Everyone is feeling the pinch—even those who do not drive—as higher gas prices increase the prices of virtually everything else, since the more it costs to transport something, the more consumers pay for it. This does, however, make people wonder why gas prices are so high and what they should do about them.

There is no single answer to what has inflated gas prices, but there are some identifiable causes. It's no secret that much imported oil comes from the Middle East. It's also well known that conflicts there lead to increased gas prices regardless of whether this unrest affects oil supplies. Recent conflicts in Egypt, Syria and Libya have contributed to price hikes, as has the escalating tension with Iran and its threats to close the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic waterway through which about 20 percent of the world's oil is shipped. The fear of limited access to oil sends gas prices through the roof.

Another contributor to inflated prices can be found here in America, and like most economic issues, the blame lies with Wall Street. Traders and speculators play a key role in gas price increases. Both Forbes and Goldman Sachs have estimated that rampant speculation has added more than 50 cents to each gallon of gas. This artificial inflation has taken money out of working people's pockets and given it to bankers. Provisions in the recent Dodd-Frank Act are aimed to limit oil speculation, but they have largely been ignored.

Resolving Middle Eastern conflicts and enforcing financial regulations could lower gas prices, but neither is simple. Another suggestion is to increase domestic supplies, an idea Republicans adopted with their "Drill, baby, drill" mentality and continued pushing to build a pipeline to bring Canadian oil to U.S. refineries.

These are short-term solutions, however, and focus on the wrong part of the supply-and-demand problem. Increasing production may lower prices temporarily, but it will also increase oil dependency. There is a finite supply of oil in the world, even if a large amount remains untapped. If current oil consumption habits continue, this supply will become exhausted, but the demand for energy will remain.

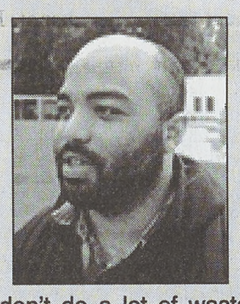
A better solution is to shift the focus toward alternative energy sources like solar, wind, biofuels and even nuclear power. Alternative energy has the added benefit of being cleaner than oil. The government gives oil companies billions in subsidies, while they rake in billions in profits. If these subsidies were directed toward alternative and renewable energy resources, America could reduce its addiction to oil and ensure that future generations have the necessary fuel sources, since there would be no worry about supply dwindling.

Gas prices are a short-term problem in need of a long-term solution.

VALLEY VIEW | HOW HAS THE RISE IN GAS PRICES AFFECTED YOU?

"It's financially budding. My family is feeling it hard. My father and I drive separate vehicles [and it costs] over $100 a week. It's hard."
-BRETT RENTA, HISTORY

"A lot. It comes down to, 'should I eat, or should I put gas in my car?'"
-NANCY ZARAGOZA, NURSING



"I don't do a lot of wasteful driving. If I can walk, I walk ... opposed to driving. If there is traffic, I wait for it to die down and go to my destination."
-EYIAN DAVIDSON, JOURNALISM

"I come to college once a day and stay all day; I can't go and come back. It's kind of wasting my time."
-TANGIK KHODAVERDIAN, MATHEMATICS

"I take the bus. I have lost weight. It forces me to plan ahead ... I have not used my car in a couple weeks."
-UCHE MCMILLAN, NURSING

COMPILED BY JD OROYE | VALLEY STAR

RELIGION MUST BE KEPT OUT OF GOV'T

Freedom of religion should apply to all religions, not just that which the majority practices.

KEVIN JERSEY
STAFF WRITER

Religious freedom is a foundation of American life. From Pilgrims fleeing religious persecution, to the authors of the Constitution and up to the present, Americans have cherished the freedom to believe whatever they want and however they choose. This freedom is now under attack.

True freedom of religion requires a separation of church and state. Believers of any faith do not have the right to impose their beliefs on others. Religion has no place in government. Our founders recognized this and wrote it into the Bill of Rights. They knew that freedom of religion also means freedom from religion.

Christianity has always been the dominant religion in this country. About 76 percent of American adults are Christian; however, those that are not are being forced to follow Christian doctrine. It is the government's job to protect these minorities from the majority.

Religious beliefs are increasingly creeping into American politics, as seen in the battles over abortion, contraception and same-sex marriage.

Presidential candidates like Rick Santorum and Michele Bachmann are inserting personal beliefs into debates and policy proposals. Politicians say this is a "Christian nation," despite the founders' explicit statements that it is not. However, anyone daring to point this out is accused of "attacking religion."

This is not freedom of religion; it is freedom to be Christian. True religious freedom terrifies some Christians. Look at how many react to Muslims and the imagined threat of Sharia Law. Muslims have the same right to their religion as anyone else, regardless of whether Christians like it. Yet, even President Barack Obama has been forced to prove his Christianity amid claims he is secretly a Muslim, as though that were evil.

These Christians are equally intolerant of atheists, scientists or anyone else who opposes their beliefs. This was epitomized this week by Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK), who rejected climate science by quoting a Bible verse.

It is unfair to paint all Christians with the same brush. Many are tolerant and accepting of others. Unfortunately, a few zealots make the rest look bad. But, the same thing has happened with other religions. Muslims are demonized based on the actions of a very few extremists, even though most are peaceful, kind and pious. Extremists of any religion are dangerous, and they always garner the most attention even though most religious people don't share their beliefs. They cannot be allowed to dictate the behavior of others.

Different Americans believe different things. Some are Christians, some are Jews and some are Muslims; some belong to other religious groups and some don't believe anything at all. Since this is America, that's fine. Americans are free to believe whatever they want, and they should be equally free from having anyone else's beliefs forced on them.

ASLEEP ON THE JOB

Lax updates leave students in the dark about Valley's crime records.

ANNE CHRISTENSEN
STAFF WRITER

Valley College seems like a relatively safe place for young adults to pursue an education. The crime record at the Sheriff's Office certainly agrees: no reports have been filed since mid-December of last year. But the Valley crime record available online tells a different story.

Since January 2012, a whopping 56 reports have been logged. Valley's administration's lax recordkeeping keeps students in the dark about how safe their campus really is.

To notify the Sheriff's Office of a crime, a student simply has to fill out a Crime Incident Report and hand it to the sheriff's administration—secretaries for the school district. In return, the student is given a report number as proof of filing. The administrative staff then types the report, crossing out any sensitive and identifiable information, and makes the report available to the public—that is, if the administration is doing its job.

Valley's administration is responsible for handling the reports and updating the record, according to Officer Billy Guzman of the Sheriff's Office. Monthly crime statistics dating back to 2002 are available online, but the actual Crime Incident Report record, publicly available at the Sheriff's Office, has not been updated since mid-December 2011.

"It's supposed to be updated every day, every time there's a new report," said Guzman.

Federal law requires crime statistics be published "in a timely manner." But Valley's inability to keep up the record has resulted in zero spring semester updates so far, despite the web record clearly reflecting 42 incidents in February, ranging from moving violations to lost properties and a single robbery thrown in for good measure. This 42-incident discrepancy reflects very poorly on Valley's record-keeping abilities and gives a wrong impression of campus safety.

The catalyst for implementing the federal law for disclosing campus crime information was 19-year-old college student Jeanne Clery, who was tortured, raped and murdered in her LeHigh University, Pennsylvania, residence hall room in 1986. Clery's parents discovered that LeHigh neglected sharing 38 previous violent crimes on campus in the three years prior to their daughter's murder.

At Valley, where the Sheriff's Office is busy handing out parking citations—a staggering 7,372 in 2011 alone—keeping the crime record updated may not seem like a big deal. But even among the ocean of parking citations, in sneaks the occasional sexual assault, rape and robbery.

Previous national incidents—the 2007 shootings at Virginia Tech University left 32 people dead; the following year, five people died in the Northern Illinois University shootings—indicate that students and the Sheriff's Office must remain vigilant.

NORTH KOREA IS OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

Kim Jong-un is a different man than his grandfather or father, and that may bode well for the United States and the people of North and South Korea.

ROBERT DECKER
STAFF WRITER

Kim Jong-un bears a striking resemblance to his grandfather, North Korea's founder and "Eternal President," Kim Il-sung. After 20 years of drought and famine, though, the country he recently inherited hardly resembles the once-proud Korea of his grandfather's era.

His people are starving.

If he does not improve food supplies and ease sanctions, he will be responsible for completing his father's decimation of North Korea's younger generation.

The United Nations released surveys showing 32 percent of children in North Korea suffer from stunted growth; in some provinces, the number reaches 45 percent. There are no official starvation-caused death statistics for North Korea, but estimates from various charities and non-governmental organizations range from 1.5 to 3.5 million deaths since the famine began in 1995.

This is only part of the botched legacy Kim Jong-un's recently deceased father, dictator and cognac enthusiast Kim Jong-il, left him.

Kim Jong-il ran his country as a hermit kingdom and controlled his people through a policy of fear and imprisonment. The cult of personality he established is one of the most extreme in recorded history, and a single insult spoken aloud about the "dear leader" could land a person and even his extended family in one of the North's dreaded labor camps, resulting in a virtual death sentence.

In a National Geographic interview by Lisa Ling, an ex-North Korean prison guard who defected to the South said, "I remember seeing two boys in the camp beat each other violently over a kernel of corn they had found in animal droppings. People were not sentenced to any length of punishment. They were simply worked to death, and to discourage people from trying to leave North Korea, the entire extended family of defectors is imprisoned."

Forced labor and imprisonment, terrible civil engineering and agricultural production, extortion of aid from the international community with nuclear weapons development threats and random unprovoked attacks on the South formed Kim Jong-il's North Korea; but, it seems his son does not want to follow in his steps.

News outlets across the world reported that North Korea agreed to suspend its uranium enrichment program and allow international inspectors into its nuclear facilities in exchange for 240 metric tons of food aid in a deal brokered with the United States during their talks in Beijing.

The deal included a special stipulation allowing the United States to send monitors to ensure the food reaches those who need it most and is not diverted to the military. This is significant given this was the exact issue that made talks break down in 2006 when the United States stopped sending aid. It also indicates that Kim Jong-un is more sincere than his father was with negotiations.

Supposedly, the North's desire to distribute large amounts of food to its people for the 100th birthday of the nation's founder, Kim Il-sung, motivated the deal. Of course, the United States must keep its guard up; but, no matter what the inspiration is, it is a step in the right direction. Hopefully, Kim Jong-un keeps putting one foot in front of the other and walks his country out of the dark ages and into a brighter future.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

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LAVC Events

MARCH

Wednesday, 14

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LAVC Art Gallery
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Performance by the Devin Doherty Quartet
Music 106
Concert Hotline: (818) 778-5633

Thursday, 15

Obscured Lines: Contemporary Drawing in Los Angeles Art Exhibition
Sponsored by LAVC Art Gallery
11 a.m. - 2 p.m., 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
LAVC Art Gallery
(818) 778-5536

Study Away in Spain Informational Meeting
1 p.m. - 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Sponsored by the LAVC Foreign Language Study Away Program
Foreign Language 104 at 1 p.m.
Foreign Language 110 at 6 p.m.
Contact: (818) 947-2387

Friday, 16

French Club Meeting
Noon - 1 p.m.
Sponsored by the LAVC French Club
Foreign Language 102
Contact: (818) 823-3724

Astronomy Group Planetarium Show
8 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Sponsored by the LAVC Earth Science Department
LAVC Planetarium
Contact: (818) 947-2864

! THINK TRANSFER

MARCH

Wednesday, 14

CSUN Mentor
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Undecided Major/Career Workshop
1 p.m. - 2 p.m.

UC Santa Barbara Virtual Appointments
1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Thursday, 15

CSU Channel Islands Representative
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Applied to UC/CSU: What's Next Workshop
5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Monday, 19

Mt. St. Mary's Representative
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

UCLA Peer Mentor
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Undecided Major/Career Workshop
5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

All activities are held in the Career/Transfer Center (Administration 126) unless otherwise indicated.

Hours for the Career/Transfer Center are Monday - Thursday from 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.

For appointments and further information, call (818) 947-2646.

For more information, also visit www.lavc.edu/transfer.

LOUIS GOSSETT JR. OFFERS HIS WORDS OF WISDOM TO VALLEY COLLEGE STUDENTS

The "Officer and a Gentleman" actor spoke to Valley College students and staff about his journey to success.

ROMEO GONZALEZ
STAFF WRITER

Valley College has had the privilege of hosting talented people who offer the community words of advice and wisdom. Now, Valley can add Academy Award–winner and author Louis Gossett Jr. after he spoke last Thursday in Monarch Hall to more than 100 people.

"I think anytime we can have an industry professional speak at our college, it's essential for students," said broadcasting instructor Jason Beaton.

At first, the former actor did not come to speak about his career or the entertainment industry. Instead, he came with his philosophy, preaching about how people can improve their lives and the world.

Gossett began with a brief summary about his life as a kid growing up in Brooklyn. Because he lived in a diverse neighborhood while growing up, his emphasis was on his foundation, the Eracism Foundation.

"We played stick ball, tag, hide and go seek – all the things that we creative children could do because we couldn't afford the big toys or the big TV sets," said Gossett. "We were out there whether we liked it or not; we needed each other and we created this a society."

As an African-American actor in the '60s, Gossett experienced a series of racial discriminations, such as being handcuffed to a tree in Beverly Hills for driving a convertible in 1966, finding feces in his dressing room and being mistreated on sets. His focus from the discrimination is to advocate that society needs to eliminate racism because if it doesn't, society will be lost.

Gossett became the voice of experience as time went on, explaining – particularly to the students – that they are the future, and everyone needs to have faith. He had everyone reflect on what they want to be in this country and what kind of world they want to live in.

"You young people have the steering wheel in your hands," said Gossett. "If you decide to be in Hollywood or go to Wall Street, you already have what you are looking for."

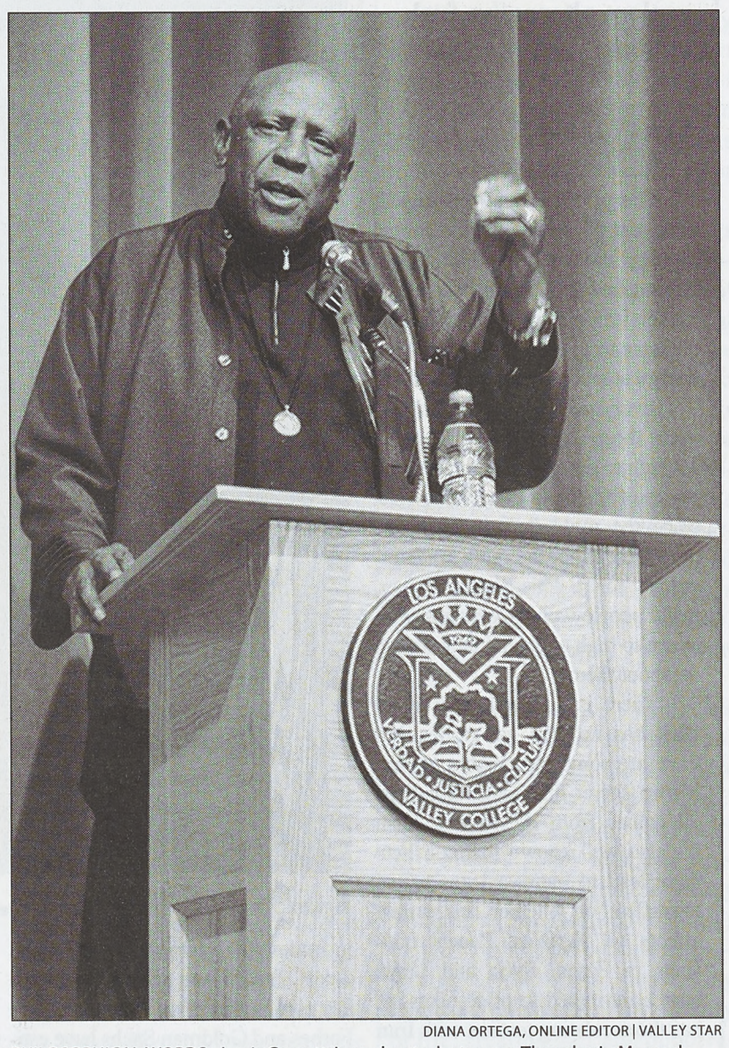
Gossett said America is the audience he was looking at and not what is seen on TV. It was a room filled with people of various ages and backgrounds.

"This looks more like America than Hollywood right now," said Gossett. "I think we have the answer for it, … young people having compassion for one another."

The lecture ended with a question and answer session between Gossett and the audience. Many wanted to find out more about his background as an actor. Others also expressed their feelings, letting him know they sympathized with what he went through as an actor.

"When I came to America at the age of 11, racism started happening; but, instead of it being from another race, it was from my own race," said biology major Fatima Tounkara. "That's when I had that understanding of there's two different shades of black."

Those looking to hear more about what Louis Gossett has to say on his journey to success can read his book, "An Actor and a Gentleman."



DIANA ORTEGA, ONLINE EDITOR | VALLEY STAR

PHILOSOPHICAL WORDS - Louis Gossett Jr. spoke at a lecture on Thursday in Monarch Hall, explaining how by the time racism was a big deal, he already knew to avoid it.

VALLEY STUDENTS STRUM ALONG

DAVID SCHUB | VALLEY STAR

TEACHING MOMENT - Master guitar student Jesse "Pepe" Perez (left) gets some helpful hints after playing "Take the A Train" by USC music graduate and Juliard student Colin Davin on Saturday In Bungalow 78 at Valley College. According to Kate Lewis, director of guitar studies at Valley College, the music department tries to host workshops for her master guitar class two times a semester by professional guitar players.

LORAINA AMEDEN | VALLEY STAR

THE RIGHT NOTE - Colin Davin performs a night of soloist classical music, as a part of the American Guitar Society's concert series. Students and members of the community filled the recital hall Saturday for an evening of music. According to Chuck Gloria, one of the students, he gets "a lot of good advice" from the master class, sponsored by the American Guitar Society.

RICHARD RAZAVI, CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER | VALLEY STAR

SWEET GOODIES, YOU'LL WANT THEM ALL - Big Sugar Bakeshop on Ventura Boulevard is home to unique confections that were conceived in the owners' home kitchens.

STUDIO CITY IS SWEET ON AFFORDABLE LOCAL BAKERY

Big Sugar Bakeshop knows how to cater to a sweet tooth and a wallet.

COURTNEY BASSLER
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

With the price of gas pushing $5, it is hard to find the money to enjoy the sweeter things in life. However, Big Sugar Bakeshop in Studio City is a hole-in-the-wall bakeshop filled with confections for those who enjoy something sugary at an affordable price.

Started five years ago by two stay-at-home mothers, Big Sugar Bakeshop is now home to a bakery featured on the Food Network and the New York Times, and it lives up to the praises of those culinary experts.

But, those visiting for the first time should look at the menu ahead of time to obtain the best customer service; also, allow extra time for parking at the Ventura Boulevard eatery.

Stepping into Big Sugar is like entering a 1950s kitchen with floral and bright-colored aprons surrounded by cakes and cookies and vinyl tables and chairs. Along with a counter of sugary treats, there are also cookbooks for sale, serving plates, knitted cupcake beanies and other trinkets such as pencil bags with funny sayings like "be nice or leave."

For a morning fix, the doughnut muffin is the way to go. At $2.50 for a regular size and $1.50 for a mini, the doughnut muffin has the taste of the popular breakfast snack but the consistency of a home-baked muffin. The doughnut muffin, one of the bakeshop's favorites, pairs well with coffee that is complementary while eating in. The coffee brings out the cinnamon in this delectable pastry and will leave one desiring another.

For a fruity option, the lemon pound cake packs a punch. Most citrus cakes have the juice added during the baking process, but what distinguishes this cake from the others is the frosting. The frosting brings out the flavor of the lemon while hints of the fruit come out in the cake.

Like every bakery these days, there's one item that is likely to be found: the cupcake. Big Sugar has an array of flavors baked daily. To experience something different, try the chococcino cupcake, a chocolate cupcake with a coffee buttercream frosting topped with a chocolate espresso bean. The frosting has the right amount of coffee for those who down several cups a day, but the buttercream balances out the strength of the coffee. For a traditional yet palatable cupcake, the pumpkin cupcake is a good option.

The salted caramel brownie, a new item on Big Sugar's menu, will make one full at the last bite. The brownie is baked perfectly and melts in the mouth. Sandwiched between the chocolate is the salted caramel, which pairs well with the richness of the chocolate; to top it, the brownie is sprinkled with salt to mix with the sugar.

The handmade ice cream sandwiches come in traditional flavors such as chocolate chip cookie and vanilla ice cream, but the one to have is a spin-off of the classic. The chocolate chip cookie with banana Heath bar ice cream is refreshing, balancing the old with the new. The banana and Heath bar balances the crunch of the go-to cookie on a sunny, southern California day.

Big Sugar Bakeshop is at 12182 Ventura Blvd. in Studio City. Its hours are Mondays through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For daily specials and deals, also check out Big Sugar Bakeshop's Facebook page.

ESA CREATES A PARIS REALITY FOR STUDENTS

The European Studies Association gives Valley College and other students the opportunity to study abroad in Paris.

LUCAS THOMPSON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dr. Tom Blair, chair of languages at City College of San Francisco and founder of the European Studies Association, always opens his study abroad Paris seminars with this statement: "Be careful, Paris is addictive."

Blair, who founded the association 34 years ago, still emphasizes the incredible educational and personal-growth opportunities the trip supplies many California students with.

"It does change a lot of people," Blair said. "The location and richness of activities … it's special."

The one-month study abroad excursion, which takes place from July 1-30, is a biannual trip that fluctuates between Paris and Montpellier. This year, students have the opportunity to travel to Paris.

Students have the choice between two programs, depending on how in depth they are looking to get into the French language and culture. There are $3,000 and $4,000 options, which include lodging, meals, transportation and two nights out in Paris. The student can choose two of three options to go out, including a dinner, ballet or opera.

The main difference between the two programs is the amount of class time and complexity of each class. The $3,000 course, or the "survival French course," includes 1.5 hours of class time per day taught by California French teachers who come with the ESA. The $4,000 program offers three hours of class time per day taught by local, Parisian faculty. Both options include visits to several historic locations in France such as Monet's home and garden, Loire Valley and a trip to Versailles, according to program leader and Valley French instructor Dominique Merrill.

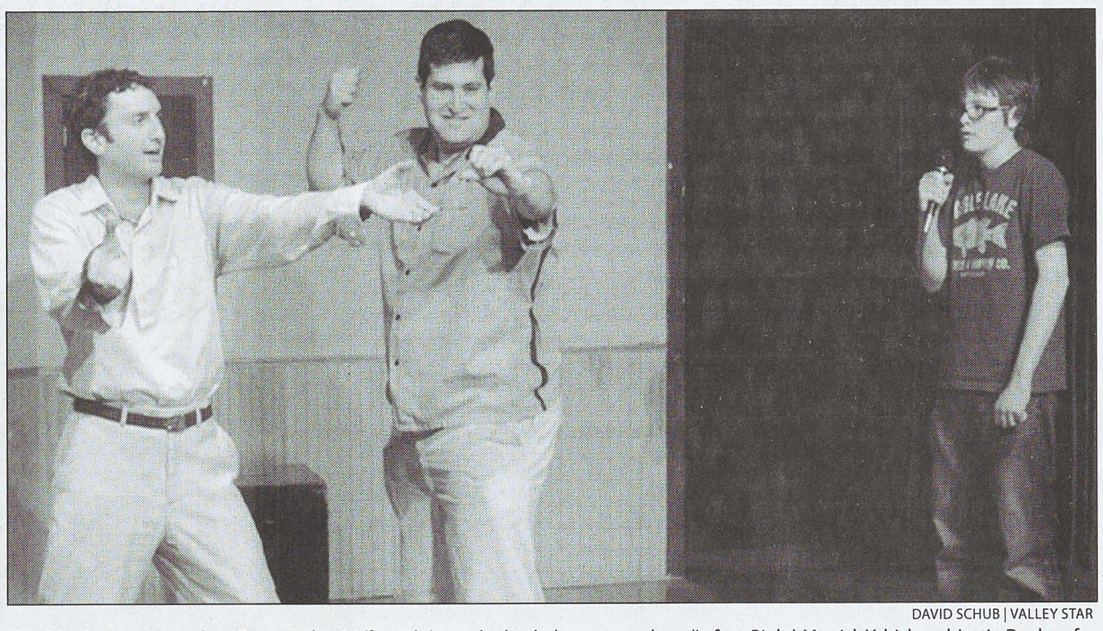
"I think it's a life-changing experience to leave your culture and to go live in another country, but Paris in particular is a very unique city," Merrill, who was born in Versailles, said.

Thus far, roughly 38 of the 100 expected students attending the program are from Valley. The ESA recruits students from, Cal State universities such as San Bernardino, San Jose State and East Bay, as well as other community colleges like East Los Angeles College.

The program gives students the opportunity to gain knowledge in French culture and language while expanding "Global Competence," which, according to Blair, is essential for students looking to succeed in the professional world.

For more information regarding the study abroad program, please visit: www.lavc.edu/paris, or attend the last informational session on Saturday, March 24 from noon to 2 p.m. in Foreign Language 104.

"It is the most-visited city in the world and there is just something about it, … it grabs you. There are a lot of thinkers, a lot of people who went to Paris to write, and it is a very unique atmosphere."



DAVID SCHUB | VALLEY STAR
I'LL GO - Audience member, Gavin Taylor, 14 (far right) is picked to help cast members (Left to Right) Merrick Yzbick and Justin Daube of "Say What?" in a skit called "Sound Effects," at L.A. Connection Comedy Theatre.

L.A. CONNECTION, A HIDDEN GEM

The Sherman Oaks theatre is an affordable way to spend a Friday night.

COURTNEY BASSLER
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

If laughter is the best medicine, then the Sherman Oaks L.A. Connection Comedy Theatre's Rookies Improv night, featuring the group "Say What?!," could cure many medical diseases.

For $10 starting at 7 p.m. every Friday, the L.A. Connection Comedy Theatre hosts its Improv and Comedy night, a different and cheaper option than an average night out in southern California.

The Ventura Boulevard theatre has been home to comedy legends such as Matthew Perry, Hank Azaria, Jon Lovitz, Mindy Sterling and Chris Kattan, and the theater marked its 35th year of hosting Improv companies.

The Improv night began with a rookie improv team of six, "Say What?!," comprised of Branden Smith, Glenn Ratcliffe, Merrick Yzbick, Krista Taylor, Justin Daube, and Trixx Ian Vitolo. Balancing new and experienced actors, the team demonstrates its love for the stage and on-the-spot acting.

"Say What?!'s" line-up had the right balance of improv classics such as "Freeze Tag" and "Interrogation Cliffhangers" to "Return Counter" and "Innuendo."

For an hour, be prepared to participate and not just sit and chuckle. This Rookie showcase has much audience participation, a staple in improvisation.

With some improv groups, audience participation can be a nightmare, but "Say What?!" took each word shouted with comedic grace and a smile.

One of the highlights of the hour was "Sound Effects" with Merrick Yzbick and Justin Daube.

"Sound Effects" required the most audience participation and included 14-year-old audience member Gavin Taylor coming on stage and providing noises that he thought would work with Yzbick and Daube's actions in the sketch. Yzbick and Daube played along swimmingly as Taylor made some confusing sounds – like a gun firing instead of wood being sawed – as the team of two built a shed.

While everyone loves a good laugh, including children, it is best to leave the young ones at home because some sketches are a bit raunchy, like "Innuendo."

"Innuendo" is another routine requiring audience members to be a part of the sketch, having them think of objects and shout out the ideas for "Say What?!" to play with. From those words shouted, there is room for questionable laughs. But, "Say What?!" took words like "soap" and turned them into lines such as "I like my women like I like my soap, slippery and wet," causing laughter, smiling and head shaking.

L.A. Connection Comedy Theatre is at 13442 Ventura Blvd. in Sherman Oaks and is open Thursday through Sunday. For more information and a schedule of events, please visit: laconnection-comedy.com.

FRIDAY NIGHT SCHEDULE AT L.A. CONNECTION

ROOKIES IMPROV - 7 P.M.

8 BALL IMPROV - 8 P.M.

"STRANGER THAN FICTION" VETERANS THAT ROCK! - 9 P.M.

LATE NIGHT ALL-STAR IMPROV SHOW - 10:30 P.M.

TICKETS ARE $10 AND AUDIENCE CAN STAY ALL NIGHT IF SEATING IS AVAILABLE.

@THE MOVIES

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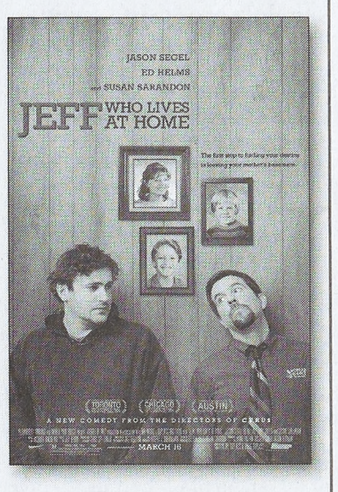

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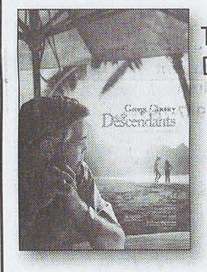

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- "STARSHIPS"- NICKI MINAJ

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- WAITING FOR GODOT: MARCH 14, MARK TAPER FORUM
- MARC ORRELL: MARCH 15, WHISKY A GO GO
- JERRY SEINFELD: MARCH 16, PANTAGES
- SARA BAREILLES: MARCH 17, TROUBADOR
- SHAM ROCK AND ROLL 2012: MARCH 17, VIPER ROOM
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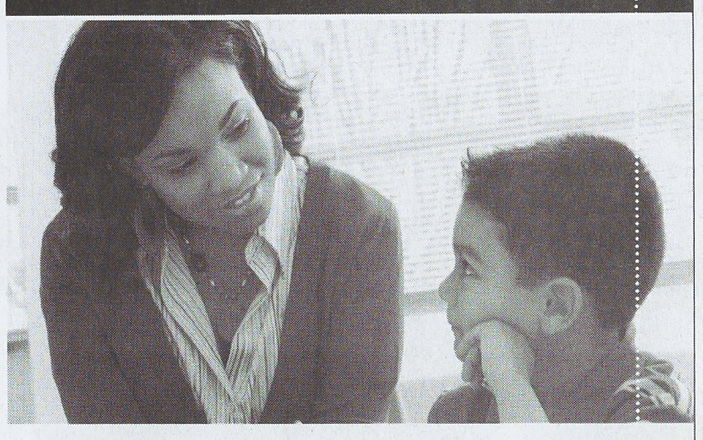

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WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PLAYER EARNS FULL RIDE TO UC IRVINE

Valley College women's basketball player Vanessa Aguilar earned a full-ride scholarship to UC Irvine.

CRISTINA SERRATO
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Valley College women's basketball guard Vanessa Aguilar had her pick of a full ride to three schools. With over 240 points scored in conference-play and mesmerizing agility, the Valley talent was offered full scholarships to the University of California Irvine, Hawaii Pacific University and Cal State University, Monterey Bay.

"Vanessa is one of the best players in the state. She has grown tremendously during her season at LAVC. I am proud of her and the things that she has accomplished," said coach Monica Hang. "She has flourished into a Division I student athlete and is currently being recruited by multiple Division I and Division II universities."

Few would guess by looking at Aguilar that behind her thin build and demure smile is a basketball dynamo capable of dominating any court. This past season she was a three-time Western State Conference player of the week and an all-conference selection. She was also a California Community College Athletic Association honorable mention.

"Vanessa Aguilar is the best student-athlete I have ever coached," said Hang, who has coached at the junior college level for more than seven years. "She is a very talented basketball player. Some of the things she is capable of doing seem so effortless. She has the best offensive skills and athleticism for her position."

At 19, Aguilar proved to be a stellar player, dedicated student and perfect role model. She is a self-professed basketball fanatic who believes her best move was coming back to Valley to train under coach Hang after a year spent on scholarship at Arizona Western University.

"Coming back to Valley was a good thing. It was good to be back," said Aguilar. "I learned a lot. I grew as a person, and training under coach Hang was a great experience. She was tough, but I'm glad. She made me a better person on and off the court."

Aguilar would love to play professionally but is currently focused on the future and a bigger picture. She wishes to find a career one day that could help her give back to others and maybe help change lives.

When asked about her reflections on the past season and the way she played, Aguilar replied, "I'm disappointed that we didn't make it to conference. It would have been the first year ever. It sucks for the team, but it is what it is."

After taking a few weeks to mull it over, Aguilar decided to take her unrivaled skills to UC Irvine, where she will major in sociology.

"I plan to play my best wherever I am at," said Aguilar. "But it's not just about me; it's about the school and the team. It's about planning for the future."

NEIL PHILLIPS, SPECIAL TO THE STAR
OFFENSE - Monarch guard Vanessa Aguilar received a full ride to UC Irvine this season.

SCOTT MITCHELL, SPECIAL TO THE STAR
DRIVING TO THE BASKET - Valley College women's basketball guard Vanessa Aguilar drives past an opposing player last season.

PEARLMAN BREAKS RECORD

Molly Pearlman set a new pole-vaulting record at Valley College.

ROMEO GONZALEZ
STAFF WRITER

Valley College's freshman pole vaulter, Molly Pearlman, hopes one day to jump three times her height. Despite standing at just 5'1, her lengthy goal has helped her break several records, including Valley's record of 9.9.25 feet by clearing the bar at 11 feet.

"It's really tough," said Pearlman. "It's really cool when you know you've made it over the bar."

Pearlman comes from a family of competitive athletes. Her mom was on the 1976 National Gymnastics Team, and her father was a competitive swimmer, swimming for the University of Miami and CSUN.

She is a product of Notre Dame High School in Sherman Oaks and is a southern California native who grew up in Burbank. At the age of three, she started gymnastics and continued to pursue the sport for 13 years, competing in meets from fall 2001 to spring 2007.

"My greatest accomplishment in gymnastics was qualifying for level nine regional championships," said Pearlman.

Unfortunately, due to an ankle injury, she had to quit gymnastics but was introduced to pole vaulting as a sophomore in high school by coach Tim Werner. At Notre Dame, Pearlman competed at the varsity level all three years she was on the team.

There, she also broke the school's record of 10'6 by clearing the bar at 10'7 her junior year. Her senior year, she repeatedly broke her own record, eventually setting the bar high for both the school and Mission League at 11'9. She also came in second place in the California State Southern sectional playoffs last year.

"I never thought I was going to do pole vaulting," said Pearlman. "I actually quit doing it for a year."

Brooks Morris, her current pole-vaulting coach at Valley, has been working with her since September 2010. According to Pearlman, he is the reason why she is at Valley. Morris has a club in which she started training during her junior year of high school.

"I would like to see her qualify for U.S Junior Championships," said Morris. "Ultimately, our goal is to get there and compete nationally."

Pearlman practices a minimum of 36 hours per week. She said she is hoping to jump 12'11 this year and would like to win a state championship and qualify for junior nationals this summer in Indiana.

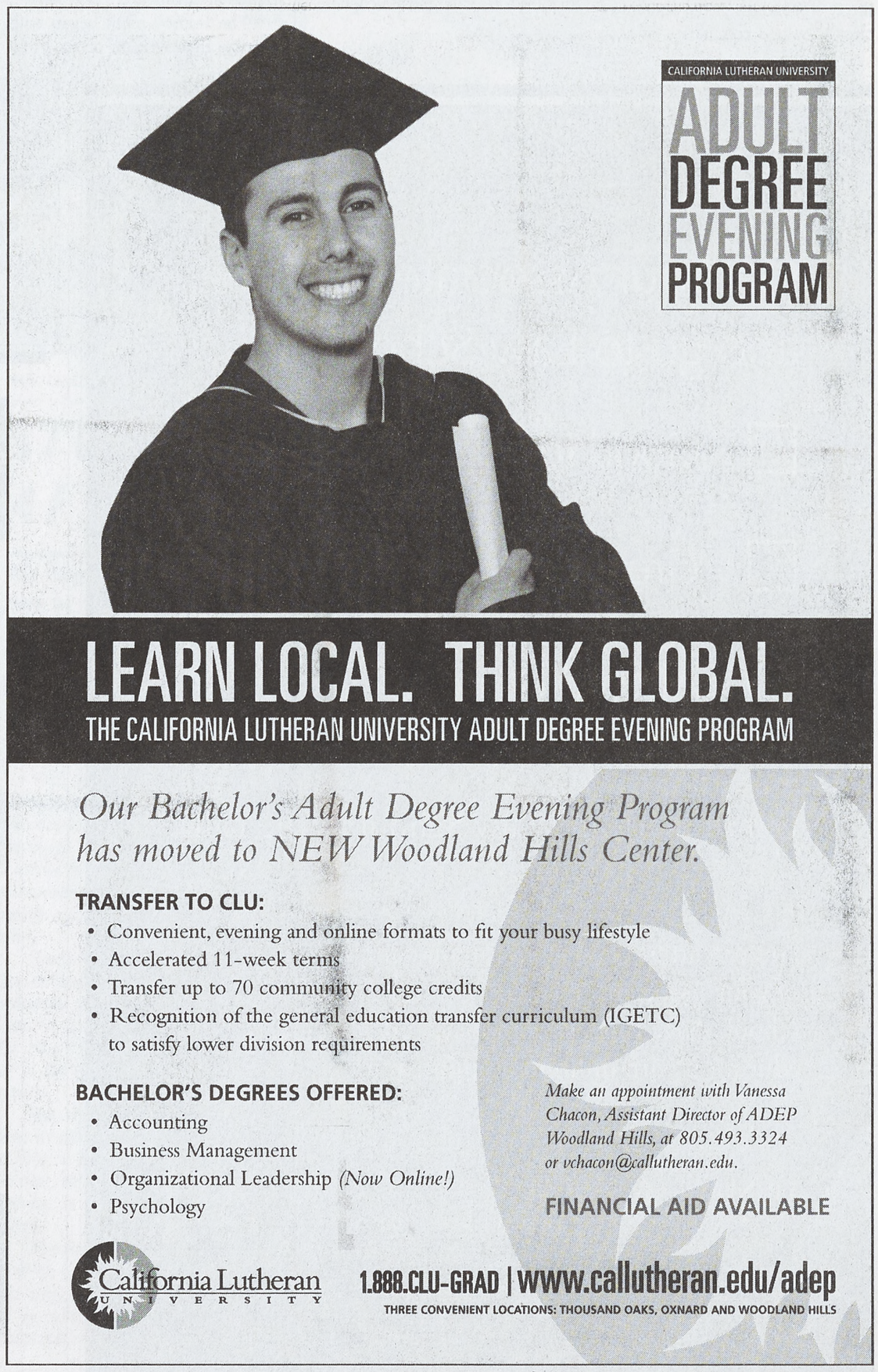
Unfortunately for Pearlman, the beginning of this season has not had a great start. She has had wrist problems since December of last year as a result of torn cartilage. According to Pearlman, the injury has a big impact on her performance and is the reason why she has only jumped 11 feet this season. She is limited to taking about 15 turns during practice in order not to agitate her injury.

"I have to put forth 110 percent every turn that I'm taking because I'm taking limited turns," said Pearlman.

According to Brooks, they will continue working around her injury to do the best they can. He predicts that toward the end of the season, Pearlman will jump in the high 12s or 13 feet. Pearlman plans to keep working hard every day to achieve her goal.

"I really want to jump like three times my height," said Pearlman.

RICHARD RAZAVI , CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER| VALLEY STAR
RAISING THE BAR - Pole-vaulter Molly Pearlman has broken Valley College's record of 9.9.25 feet by vaulting 11 feet.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